(1961) record the collection of seven specimens from small flocks, all from Hargeisa westwards, and considered the species to be rare.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank Mr R.T. Shepherd for very kindly supplying the agricultural data, and Mr A.R. Tribe, Government Forestry Officer for allowing me access to the Borama Forestry Reserve and for his companionship in the field.

REFERENCES

ARCHER, G.F. & GODMAN, E.M. 1961. *The Birds of British Somaliland and the Gulf of Aden.* Vol. 4. Edinburgh and London: Oliver & Boyd.

ASH, J.S. & MISKELL, J.E. 1983. *Birds of Somalia, their habitat, status and distribution. Scopus* Special Supplement No. 1.

CLARKE, G. 1985. Bird observations from NW Somalia. *Scopus* 9: 24-42.

GAZETTEER

Arabsiyo	9:41N 43:46E	Hargeisa	9:33N 44:04E
Berbera	10:26N 45:02E	Medishe	10:45N 47:35E
Borama	9:56N 43:11E	Megagwein	9:30N 44:10E approx.
Dabolaq	9:31N 43:52E	Odweina	9:24N 45:04E
Erigavo	10:37N 47:22E	Wogr, Mt	10:01N 45:26E

G. Clarke, Juniper House, 2 Bellingham Road, Kendal LA9 5JW, U.K.

Scopus 10: 51-54, June 1986 Received 13 January 1986

BIRDS VISITING A RECENTLY FILLED DAM IN TANZANIA

In 1944 a small catchment area on the Ardai Plains, 32 km SW of Arusha, Northern Tanzania, was dammed with an earth dam. The reservoir behind the dam did not flood until March 1946, after heavy rain on the night 18/19 March, when, by the next morning, the dam was more than half full. The main rains which followed were very poor, only another 100 mm being recorded, and while the dam filled almost to the spillway, the water level gradually fell through May, and receded rapidly in June. It was estimated that, when the dam was at its fullest, the water area was approximately 1 ha. The nearest permanent water to the Ardai dam was the large Meserani dam, 14 km to the SE. The Eluanata dam, 4.5 km to the NW was almost dry at the time.

At 10:00 on the next morning, 19 March, there were already three species of waterfowl and two species of wader at the dam. Four other visits were made to the dam in March, April, May and June and the species present on all occasions are shown in Table 1. Unfortunately no visits were possible after June, but the dam would have been dry by the end of July, if not earlier.

The first, and possibly most striking feature, is the speed with which the new water was found by those five species. Three of them were Palaearctic migrants which might already have been moving northwards. The Red-billed Teal (scientific names are given in Table 1) is a great wanderer and during the rains appears on many casual waters, but the Egyptian Goose is more sedentary and its early presence more unexpected.

Three days later there were two Palaearctic migrants, Garganey in slightly larger numbers, and a single Marsh Sandpiper. The only other wildfowl were a small flock of Spur-winged Geese, a species prone to local movements. The Crowned Cranes were probably the local resident birds, but the appearance of a Kittlitz's Sandplover, a rather sedentary species, was unexpected.

By 11 April the number of species had increased to eight, one of which was a rather unexpected Little Grebe, largely resident on permanent waters although individuals do wander occasionally to casual water in the rains (Britton 1980). This was the last occasion on which Palaearctic migrants were recorded, but they may well have continued to make some use of the dam after that date. It would have been of interest to know whether the Marsh Sandpiper had remained at the dam from 22 March. The only Black-winged Stilt seen at the dam was recorded on the April visit, and the bird could have been a Palaearctic migrant. There were only three records of visits by egrets or herons, the first on 11 April by a Little Egret.

By 23 May the Little Grebes had increased to three and a Black-headed Heron was present. Waterfowl were in larger numbers, with a return of Red-billed Teal and the appearance of four Hottentot Teal and two Southern Pochard, some of which possibly became temporarily resident for there were still five Red-billed Teal, two Hottentot Teal and three Southern Pochard present on 20 June.

Another unexpected species, a single Black Crake, was found at the dam in May. This species is mainly sedentary, although individuals do wander, but with the absence of aquatic vegetation and good cover round the dam, it is difficult to see what could have been attractive to this bird. It was not there at the last visit in June.

The only Passerine recorded at the dam was the Quail Finch. On 23 May this frequenter of muddy shores of lakes and dams was numerous round the edges of the dam. The species was a local breeding resident.

After 23 May the water level receded rapidly and by 20 June the dam was barely a quarter full. However, it was still very attractive to waterfowl, with a flock of 100 Knob-billed Ducks present, and four other species of duck (see Table 1). New visitors were a single Great White Egret, 10 Blacksmith Plovers, and a single Three-banded Plover, the last mainly a sedentary bird, but liable to local seasonal movements.

On the June visit flocks of all three species of resident sandgrouse were watering at the dam at 08:45, the Yellow-throated Sandgrouse

Table 1. *The number of each species present at the dam at each visit*

	19 Mar	22 Mar	11 Apr	23 May	20 Jun
Little Grebe *Tachybaptes ruficollis*			1	3	
Black-headed Heron *Ardea melanocephala*				1	
Great White Egret *Egretta alba*					1
Little Egret *E. garzetta*			1		
Egyptian Goose *Alopochen aegyptiaca*	1				
Red-billed Teal *Anas erythrorhynchos*	2			9	5
Hottentot Teal *A. hottentota*				4	2
Garganey *A. querquedula*	2	5			
Southern Pochard *Netta erythrophthalma*				2	3
Spur-winged Goose *Plectropterus gambensis*		13	11		
Knob-billed Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotis*					100
Crowned Crane *Balearica pavonina*		2	2		2
Black Crake *Limnocorax flavirostris*				1	
Kittlitz's Sandplover *Charadrius pecuarius*		2			
Three-banded Plover *C. tricollaris*					1
Blacksmith Plover *Vanellus armatus*					c.10
Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*			1		
Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glarola*	2				
Marsh Sandpiper *T. stagnatalis*		1	1		
Redshank *T. totanus*	3		3		
Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*			1		
Black-faced Sandgrouse *Pterocles decoratus*					*

Continued overleaf

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *P. exustus*	*
Yellow-throated Sandgrouse *P. gutturalis*	*
Quail Finch *Ortygospiza atricollis*	**

* All three species of sandgrouse coming to water at 08:45
** Many round the shore

greatly outnumbering the Black-faced and the Chestnut-bellied. For sandgrouse from the Ardai the Meserani Dam was the main watering place, where they were regularly shot. The new dam would have been of greater convenience and undisturbed as hunters had not been attracted to it.

DISCUSSION

In the first four days after the dam held water it had been visited by nine species, four of which were Palaearctic migrants, and five residents. The presence of two resident species at the dam only a few hours after it had partially filled suggests a rapid response to the arrival of the first heavy rains, and a search for new feeding sites. Over the three months of observation 20 resident species visited the dam, but of those only three species of duck may have become resident for the last few weeks, when the water level was falling. Of the others, only Spurwing Goose and Crowned Crane were recorded on more than one occasion. But the fact that a new sheet of water was visited by such diverse species as Little Grebe, Black Crake and Kittlitz's Sandplover suggests that casual movements by some species of generally more sedentary habits are more frequent than might be expected.

One can only conjecture what the attraction of this small dam was to the species visiting it. There would have been no truly aquatic flora or fauna when the dam first held water. It could have offered a resting place for long-distance migrants, and the waders might have been able to find invertebrates with the moistening of otherwise very hard ground at the edge of the water. Others, such as the three solitary members of the heron family, which were each recorded only once, having been attracted by a sheet of water expecting to find food, could have been disappointed and moved on. For the Black Crake the habitat would have been even less inviting, lacking dense cover round the water's edge.

N.R. Fuggles-Couchman, Post House, High Street, Broughton, Stockbridge, Hants SO20 8AA, England

Scopus 10: 54-57, June 1986 Received 30 April 1986